

Arlington Conservation Commission  
Minutes  
March 16, 2017

Mr. Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the second floor conference room of the Town Hall Annex. Present were Chair Nathaniel Stevens, Commissioners Mike Nonni, Charles Tirone, Curt Connors, Susan Chapnick, David White, and Associate Member Catherine Garnett. Commission member Janine White was not present. Also present were Bruce Whelittle, Gene Crouch (VHB), Cory Rivenburgh (Spectra), Jimmy Stafford (Spectra), Tammy McGill-Hoyt (Spectra), John Steward (Spectra) and Paula Fagan.

**7:30pm Commission Business:**

Meeting minutes from the 3/2/17 meeting were discussed and edited. Ms. Coleman to add in documents considered. Agreed that the MWRA was issued an Administrative Approval rather than Order of Conditions. Chapnick/DWhite motioned to approve the Meeting Minutes from 03/02/17 with edits; motion passed unanimously.

**Mystic Riverfront Restoration Plan**

DEP provided comments online which were discussed.

1. DEP commented that Swamp Milkweed should be replaced. Ms. Garnet agreed that Swamp Milkweed might not thrive there. Gene Crouch suggested Milkweed and Ms. Garnet suggested Plethora might be a suitable alternative. Ms. Chapnick will confer with Mr. Nonni about a replacement for that plant should it not thrive.
2. DEP suggested developing a plan to monitor the plants over the life of the permit. It was agreed that the Conservation Commission has covered this in the Order of Conditions.
3. DEP commented that invasive species removal should have been included. Ms. Chapnick explained that was thoughtful decision as it was assumed that invasive species would be covered in the Memorandum of Understanding with DCR. Mr. Tirone also suggested this could be included in the Operations and Maintenance plan when it is submitted.

It was agreed that Nat Strosberg of the Arlington Planning Department would be asked if he can relay this information to the DEP and that the Commission will not alter the Order of Conditions, which was already issued on March 7.

Ms. Garnet mentioned that Stella Lensing, DCR Planner and her replacement at DCR might be interested in helping with the plantings for this project as it is on DCR land. Stella gets an allotment for trees and other plants for all of DCR. Ms. Garnet will be a liaison between the Town and Ms. Lensing.

Ms. Chapnick informed the Commission that Bill Copithorne, Assistant Town Engineer will be putting out the construction bid the following week.

**Old Schwamb Mill**

Mr. White explained that the wooden shingle roof on one of the buildings at Old Schwamb Mill is being replaced. Mr. White has been in contact with Dermot Whittaker, President of the Schwamb Mill Preservation Trust, Inc., who has said the brook and bank will be protected. There is a 45° slope towards the brook and the Mill building is only 15-20 feet from the brook. Mr. White will contact Mr. Whittaker again asking him to install fencing or other barriers to prevent debris from falling onto the bank or into the brook. (Mr. Tirone pointed out that roof tiles are treated to impede moss growth), and to be careful about the disturbing the plantings on the slope. Mr. Tirone also asked for before and after photos.

**7:45 pm      Notice of Intent - 88 Coolidge Road**

At the applicant's request, DWhite/Tirone moved to continue the hearing to April 6 at 8pm.

Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Stevens updated the Commission members on the peer review process. Nobis has asked for changes to the wording of the contract which Doug Heim, Town Counsel, is dealing with. The amended contract will have to be re-signed by Town Counsel and the Town Manager.

**8:00 pm      Notice of Intent - Algonquin J-1 Systems pipeline (under intersection of Mystic River and Alewife Brook) #91-0295**

Mr. Crouch distributed the following documents for consideration:

*Notice of Intent Additional Information, dated March 15, 2017,*

*An Erosion and Sediment Control Plan for the Mystic River Crossing Replacement produced by Algonquin Gas Transmission, LLC, revised June 6, 2014,*

*A set of 6 plans, J-System Mystic River Pipe Replacement Proposed 24" Line No. J-1, Middlesex County, MA, marked Preliminary and dated 3/15/2017*

Mr. Crouch also provided proof of mailing to abutters and electronic copies of the drawings on a USB drive to Ms. Coleman.

Mr. Crouch described the site referencing the plans. A section of the 24" gas pipeline running under the Mystic River needs to be replaced due to "an anomaly" in the pipeline. Replacement from above ground was considered and rejected as it would have greater impacts to wetland resource areas. Algonquin proposes to use directional drilling to insert the pipe horizontally from the Somerville side of the riverbank, for a final depth of 40-45' beneath the riverbed, emerging on the Arlington side. The drill locations on both the Arlington and Somerville sides belong to DCR. Since there is a little more room on the Somerville side the 200' pipe lengths can be assembled there. The total drill length is under 1000' with approximately 500' directly under the river. Bedrock exists 20' below the surface on the Somerville side and 45' below the surface on the Arlington side. Fill and marine sediments lie above the bedrock. Mr. Crouch explained that when the Mystic Parkway was built Alewife Brook was straightened and the marsh filled in. Not much activity will occur in Arlington during drilling; the Arlington site will be busy during pullback which will take 4-5 days. The new plans show where the drilling rig will be located. There will be no grading in the floodplain; the ground will be restored to existing conditions.

A 200' trench will be dug for the tie-in pipe which will be strung on the ground beside the trench and set into the trench in one piece.

John Steward, Construction Manager, explained that in an effort to avoid impacting the bike path, the trenching might not be done in one procedure.

Mr. Crouch clarified that there will be a construction fence around the whole site and the eastern trail will be open during drilling; when the trenching is being done the western trail can be re-opened.

Mr. Tirone asked if there would be digging to get the drill into position.

Mr. Steward answered that the drill will be on a carriage to enter the site and can lift itself up off the ground to do the drilling.

Mr. Crouch noted that, as requested, an erosion control plan has been provided. It shows that the site will extend on to half of Decatur Street; the bike path will remain open leaving access to Decatur or Mystic Valley parkway; the plan also shows trees currently proposed for removal or protection. A Landscaping Plan will be developed in association with DCR.

Tammy McGill-Hoyt (Spectra) explained that DCR had led her to believe DCR would take the lead on reviewing and approving the landscaping plan.

Mr. Stevens explained that the Conservation Commission will need to see the plan to determine that it meets the Commission's vegetation replacement requirements. Mr. Stevens pointed out that Section 24 of the Regulations for Wetlands Protection contains a table showing the caliper replacement requirements and requirements for what information needs to be submitted to the Commission. Ms. McGill-Hoyt showed photographs of the trees and bushes to be replaced; these include all the shrubs around the parking lot, though it is unknown as yet where or what the replacements will be; also DCR has asked for removal of the trees behind the rectifier panel. Mr. Stevens noted that the trees at the northeastern end of the site are outside the 200' jurisdiction of the Commission. Ms. Garnett explained that the Commission is less concerned with the placement of the trees than with the quality and the quantity of the vegetation. Ms. Coleman asked about a clump of trees she and Mr. Crouch had discussed on the southwestern side of the site which had been previously been slated for protection. DCR has asked for them to be removed and replaced with a line of trees.

Mr. Crouch affirmed an understanding that the landscape plan must align with the bylaw and regulations and VHB must provide evidence if they cannot fit all the expected trees on site. It is also likely that they will not maintain removed trees for replacement back on site.

Mr. Crouch demonstrated that the equipment list and Bentonite MSDS sheet were in the packet provided to everyone. He also provided 2 copies of the Algonquin master Sediment and Erosion Control Plan, which he will also send electronically. Many of the details in that plan will not apply to this project.

Ms. Chapnick asked if the Bentonite will be kept wet all the time and pointed out that the silica component is dangerous if in a dried form (as silica-laden dust).

James Stafford (Spectra) explained that it comes in bags and is put into a hopper with a vacuum. The operator wears a mask and minimal dust is released.

Mr. Tirone asked about the composition of the construction fence.

Mr. Stafford: It will be chain link panels with concrete bases.

Mr. Connors asked if the water will come from the municipal system.

Mr. Crouch and Mr. Stafford confirmed that the water for the drilling and testing will come from hydrants off Boston Ave. and Decatur St. and the draw will be metered. The drilling water and mud will be shipped offsite in mud trucks. The water for the pipeline testing will either go into a recharge pit or offsite.

Ms. Coleman asked about the knotweed observed onsite. Mr. Crouch will confer with DCR about it.

There was another exchange about the role of DCR versus the Town; Ms. McGill-Hoyt expressed concern that the Chapter 91 process would be held up.

Mr. Stevens indicated that this was a good reason to read the Commission regulations and push DCR to approve the draft landscaping plan.

Ms. McGill-Hoyt also clarified that it was Algonquin's suggestion to remove the clump of trees near the rectifier (not DCR's); and that Algonquin will likely not want to plant in November.

Mr. Connors pointed out that the tree replacement in Section 24 of the Regulations mentions 3 growing seasons for monitoring.

Mr. Connors asked about the polyacrylamide mentioned on page 13 of the NOI as a slope stabilizer.

Mr. Crouch explained that it acts similarly to a floc log: it is applied at low ppm concentrations and is not hydrophilic but when it does dissolve it creates long chain ionic polymer molecules that attract soil particles. Once the soil is treated with this it doesn't re-suspend. The pores are pulled apart allowing the water to go through. It will break down in about 3 months into elemental components. It is slippery.

Mr. Connors requested the MSDS sheet for the polyacrylamide. He also asked that the **Conservation Commission be notified in the case of an inadvertent release.**

In response to Ms. Coleman's prompt, Mr. Crouch confirmed that swamp mats might be used if conditions are muddy; these will be installed before the equipment arrives.

Mr. Tirone asked about mud containment.

Mr. Crouch confirmed erosion controls would be installed close to the river; Mr. Steward indicated that wheels of equipment would be washed before leaving the site, mats will prevent equipment sinking into the mud, and there will be Geotech fabric to collect mud from vehicles entering and leaving the site. Erosion control devices could be put around trenches, which could be open 3-4 days, and around trench casts.

Mr. Tirone asserted that **no trenches are to be left open over a weekend** (condition) and asked if there is an individual assigned to oversee erosion control.

Ms. Pejatovic informed the Commission that an Environmental Inspector will check erosion controls daily and will also observe if BMPs are being adhered to. The Inspector produces a form report daily including photos that is kept on record and also sent to the EPA. He/she will approach the Supervisor if non-compliance is observed. The Inspector is hired for the specific job contract and must have 10+ years experience on pipeline projects, a Bachelor of Science degree, Erosion & Sediment Control Certification and understand FERC and MA requirements. The Inspector and everyone on site undergoes Environmental and Safety training.

**The name of the Environmental Inspector will be provided to the Commission** (condition).

**A batch of Inspection reports will be sent to the Commission weekly** (condition).

Mr. Crouch confirmed there will be 3 acres of workspace so **a stormwater pollution prevention plan will be produced and a copy provided to the Commission** (condition).

DWhite/Connors moved to continue the hearing to Apr 6 at 8:15pm to address the Tree Replacement Plan; motion passed unanimously.

To be provided by Algonquin/VHB:

Landscaping Plan

The MSDS sheet for polyacrylamide.

#### **8:15 pm      Discussion – Request to Amend Order of Conditions – 40 Reed Street DEP # 91-0283**

The Conservation Commission had issued an Order of Conditions on December 5, 2016, for alteration of the existing house and planting of a butterfly garden. Tom Hughes of Hughes Environmental Consulting representing the property owners the Feymans explained the situation and work proposed to rectify the problems encountered.

*Documents provided:*

*Plan A-0.2 Proposed Site Conditions (40 Reed Street, Arlington), revised March 16, 2017*

Mr. Hughes explained that snowmelt had led to water pouring into the house. Upon inspection, they found plumbing going into the sewer system. They would like to fix the perimeter drain and send gravity drainage from the perimeter and sump into an infiltration trench under a grass swale. The slopes will be between 2:1 and 3:1. The sandy loam beneath the swale will help with infiltration into a gravel-filled box approx. 12" by 12" through which the gravity pipe will run. The rest of the water will go into the rain garden. They are hoping to avoid the sumps working at all.

Ms. Chapnick asked if the rain garden can hold the water.

Mr. Hughes responded that the rain water will only hit the raingarden after big storms. It will run over the berm into the wetland. He pointed out that the water will be clean.

Mr. Tirone asked if the sump is located at the optimal spot.

Mr. Hughes responded that the level had been measured and gravity should bring the water into the gravel box.

Mr. Stevens laid out the options for how to deal with the proposed change to the project. Should it be considered as a Plan Change requiring a letter as approval; a minor Amendment which would require a hearing; or a new Project requiring a new Notice of Intent?

Chapnick/DWhite moved that the project amendment be considered as a Plan Change, motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Coleman will draft a letter to the Feymans confirming that the Plan Change was approved and copying DEP.

9:30pm           **Commission Updates:**

**Waterbodies Committee**

Ms. Chapnick recapped that Brown & Caldwell's report on the McClennen retention basin has been reviewed; Brown & Caldwell determined the reddish brown flocculation in the pond posed no human health risk but might pose an ecological risk. The Waterbodies committee got approval for \$10k from the town for the next fiscal year to hire an ecological risk assessor. Risk assessors mentioned who will be invited to submit a proposal include Jerry Cura, LSP, Woods Hole Group and Paul McManus, LSP. Mr. White pointed out that the Waterbodies Fund is administered by DPW so Ms. Chapnick will alert Teresa DiBenedictus about this intention. Mr. Tirone said the committee can apply to the CPA for additional funds, as needed, to perform the ecological risk assessment work and possibly for works contributing to aesthetic value.

**Community Preservation Committee**

Mr. Tirone informed Commission that the CPC's last meeting was cancelled because of snow and the next will be Wednesday March 22. The Spy Pond Proposal has received universal praise.

**Grant Applications**

Ms. Garnett explained she worked long and hard and submitted the application for the federal LWCF program to supplement the funding approved by the Community Preservation Committee for the Spy Pond Restoration project. The Recreation Department would have to fund the paths by 50%. Mr. Tirone wondered if the DPW would donate accessibility ramps. Ms. Garnett confirmed that Jim Feeney, Assistant Town Manager, has said that they could look into getting ramps if it looks like their absence would block awarding of the grant. Mr. Tirone asked if Mr. Feeney would be willing to commit 2 or 3 ADA-compliant entrances to the field.

**MWRA hearing follow-up**

Ms. Coleman will send an email to Ms. Moran mentioning that we have agreed that "all dirt from any excavations will be trucked off-site daily," a note that had not been included in the conditions contained in the letter approval already issued.

**Civics Day**

Mr. White described the upcoming Civics Day on 3/4/17 which appears to include representatives from various town departments. It was agreed Ms. Coleman would attend with materials representing the Commission if welcome.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Coleman, temporary Conservation Administrator